

REMARKS

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner asserted that the present application contains claims directed to three patently distinct species of the claimed invention. In particular, the Examiner asserted that Species 1 is illustrated in Figures 1-5, Species 2 is illustrated in Figure 6-9, and Species 3 is illustrated in Figures 10-13. The Examiner required Applicants to elect, in accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 121, a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable.

The Examiner additionally required Applicants to identify the species that has been elected, consistent with the requirements set out and to include a listing of all claims readable on the elected species, including any subsequently added claims.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner did not indicate the existence of any generic claims. Accordingly, to complete the record, Applicants respectfully submit that at least claims 1- 3, 11 and 12-14 are generic to the claimed invention.

In compliance with the Examiner's requirement, by the present response, Applicants have elected the species identified by the Examiner as species 1, to which Figures 1-5 are directed, for examination on the merits. Applicants have additionally identified that claims 1-6, 11 and 12-17 read on the elected invention or are generic claims.

Applicants have made the above noted election with traverse for reasons as are set forth hereinbelow. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that the totality of the features defining the identified species, are so related and contain such a significant

amount of overlap and common recitations that requiring an election of one species would cause a significant burden on the Applicants. Moreover, Applicants respectfully note that only four dependent claims are directed to each of the other two identified species.

Moreover, the Examiner has not set forth the existence of a serious burden if the above noted election of species requirement were not required. In fact, Applicants respectfully submit that there would be no serious burden on the Examiner in performing a search and an examination on the merits of all of the claims pending in the present application. In other words, any search for each of the above noted species would contain a significant amount of overlap with the search for any of the other ones of the above noted species.

Accordingly, for each of the above noted reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding election of species requirement, together with an action on the merits of all of claims 1-21 pending in the present application.

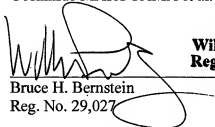
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to comply with the Examiner's requirement and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have elected a single species for examination in accordance with Examiner's requirements and have traversed the outstanding election of species requirement.

Applicants have provided a clear and convincing bases for the reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding election of species requirement and respectfully request consideration of such arguments and withdrawal of the requirement.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this paper, or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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